

AGING PATIENTS WITH HHT



Cure HHT is committed to lifelong support for individuals and families affected by HHT. We strive to provide patients with the education and resources necessary to self-advocate.

You should consult with an HHT specialist regarding questions or concerns about progressing health issues. Cure HHT ensures that all HHT Centers of Excellence feature a team of dynamic experts who will offer the best possible treatments to ensure you maintain a high quality of life.

FACTSHEET
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CONTACT US

P 410.357.9932
F 410.357.0655

hhtinfo@curehht.org
www.curehht.org

SOME IMPORTANT FACTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT HHT ARE:

As you get older, your HHT symptoms may change either in frequency or variety.

Aging with HHT can create health care challenges, such as increased risk of iron deficiency, bleeding in the GI tract, telangiectases, and heart complications.

It is important to schedule regular physician visits and monitor any health changes.

With the proper care, aging patients with HHT can maintain a high quality of life.



The Cornerstone of
the HHT Community

HHT Foundation International Inc.
P.O. Box 329 / Monkton / MD 21111



AGING PATIENTS WITH HHT:

As you get older, your HHT symptoms may change either in frequency or variety. You may start to notice more red spots (telangiectasia) on your skin, and your nosebleeds may be more frequent or more severe. This is not uncommon, but it is important to schedule regular physician visits and monitor any health changes.

Aging with HHT can create health care challenges. Some of the more common are listed below.

GREATER RISK OF IRON DEFICIENCY

- › Your physician can conduct regular blood work to check your iron levels and prescribe a supplement to help regulate and maintain them.
- › Eating iron-rich foods such as spinach, lentils, eggs, beans, and shrimp can also help to stabilize iron levels.
- › It is important, particularly if you have a history of GI bleeding or telangiectasia, to watch for gastrointestinal bleeding. Some iron supplements can irritate the GI tract and cause more harm than good. Intravenous Iron infusion therapy may be needed to ensure that your iron levels remain at normal levels.

PROGRESSION OF GASTROINTESTINAL BLEEDING

- › Once over age 50, HHT patients are more likely to develop bleeding in the GI tract. The best way to keep an eye on potential bleeding is to schedule regular checkups with your physician. If you begin to become fatigued easily or experience swelling in your ankles, a physician should be consulted.
- › Procedures to consider for treatment of GI bleeding include hormonal and endoscopic therapies. Other common remedies include oral or intravenous iron therapy and blood transfusions.

TELAGIECTASES BECOME MORE APPARENT

- › Your physician can conduct regular blood work to check your iron levels and prescribe a supplement to help regulate and maintain them.

LIVER AVMS CAN LEAD TO HEART FAILURE

- › Liver AVMs are common in HHT patients. Years of overwork from pumping extra blood through the low resistance pathway of a liver AVM can strain the heart and can potentially cause heart failure. The heart can become enlarged due to overwork.
- › It is essential, especially as you age, to make regular visits to an HHT Center to check for liver AVMs and heart complications. If you are unable to visit a center, we encourage that you call the Cure HHT office or check the HHT Physician Directory at curehht.org to find a physician in your area that is familiar with treating HHT patients.
- › Decisions regarding treatment of liver AVMs are made on a case-by-case basis and we recommend that you consult with an HHT Center of Excellence to determine the treatments that will be most beneficial to you.



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